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USUN FOR DELAURENTIS AND RENEAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/08/2018  
TAGS: PREL PHUM KPAO UNSC BM  
SUBJECT: GUIDANCE FOR SRSG GAMBARI UNSC BURMA BRIEFING,  
SEPTEMBER 11

REF: A. USUN 795  
    1B. RANGOON 679  
    1C. RANGOON 678  
    1D. RENEAU-GARUCKIS TELECON 9-8-08

Classified By: IO Acting A/S Brian Hook. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (U) This is an action message.  
12. USUN should draw from the points in para 4 , from the objectives in para 5, and from the background in paras 7-9 in response to SRSG Ibrahim Gambari's UNSC briefing on Burma, currently scheduled for September 11, as well as Gambari's scheduled September 12 "Friends of Burma" briefing.

13. Additionally, Department commends USUN's early coordination with the P3 (Ref D) and asks that coordination continue in the run up to the "Group of Friends of the Secretary General on Burma" meeting, to be held at the Foreign Minister level September 29. To further this effort, USUN should pursue the objectives in para 5-in discussions with both SYG Ban and like-minded nations on the margins of the briefing. In making this approach, as well as in preparing for the September 11 and 12 briefings, USUN should refer to the documents that lay out Gambari's mandate, including the Council's PRSTs, UNGA resolutions, and the guiding memorandum for the office of the Special Envoy. Para. 6 includes guidance for public statements on the issue.

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Talking Points  
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14. (U) Begin points, to be supplemented as appropriate from the objectives in para 5 and the background in para 7-9:

I would like to thank Special Advisor Gambari for his briefing to the Council. The United States has strongly supported the Secretary General's "good offices" Mission. Unfortunately, the results of Mr. Gambari's most recent visit clearly demonstrate that the regime in Burma continues to defy repeated calls by the Security Council for the release of all political prisoners including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and for genuine, time-bound dialogue leading to democratization.

Today I would like to make three points:

-- First, the Burmese regime conducted its May constitutional referendum in an environment of fear and intimidation, and has not met this Council's request to do away with laws prohibiting free debate. It again extended Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's detention. It continues to beat, arrest, and imprison individuals who have peacefully expressed alternate views to those of the regime or protested its sham "roadmap to democracy."

-- The regime must release all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and should do so immediately, not at some vague time in the future when the regime no longer deems them a threat to its unlawful rule. Burma must heed the calls of the Security Council and ASEAN to immediately begin a genuine, transparent, and inclusive dialogue with all democratic and ethnic minority groups with the support of the United Nations.

-- My second point is that we are deeply disappointed that during Mr. Gambari's most recent visit to Burma, he was not granted a meeting with the controlling senior generals who are the only ones that can implement the genuine change called for by the international community. With each of Mr. Gambari's visits to Burma since last September, the level of access he has been permitted by the regime has dropped. I think we all realize that any promises made by the regime are meaningless unless they are guaranteed by the senior generals.

-- Third, we believe more must be done. It is time for the Secretary General and for this Council to hold the regime to account for its lack of compliance with the calls of the United Nations Security Council. We urge the Secretary General to begin stronger efforts to secure the compliance of the Burmese regime with the requests made in the PRST unanimously passed by this Council on October 11th, 2007. In that important statement, the Council emphasized

"the importance of the early release of all political prisoners and remaining detainees." And it called on the regime to "take all necessary measures to address the political, economic, humanitarian and human rights that are the concern of its people." These conditions have not been met. Even as the Secretary-General should take a stronger stance, this Council must also deliberate on the consequences of the Burmese regime's lack of action to fulfill its obligations to this body. The Burmese regime is in clear defiance of this Council's statements and demands, and it is time for us to consider stronger action.

(End points)

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Objectives  
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15. (C) USUN should pursue the following objectives in the briefing as appropriate:

-- Refocus UN priorities on Burma;

-- Concentrate questioning and express concern over the lack of UN focus and regime progress in the core areas of legitimate, time-bound political dialogue and the release of political prisoners;

-- Reinforce the fact that the UNSC has committed to remaining seized with Burma and that it therefore must continue to push for the regime to honor the October 2007 PRST;

-- Express concern that Gambari was promoting the idea of an "economic forum" (which could be seen as a reward by the regime);

-- Express concern that the UN should not be seen as validating the regime's discredited "roadmap"; and

-- Inquire as to steps Gambari has taken to protest the regime's propaganda efforts, and explain how his acquiescence to these efforts has damaged his and the UN's credibility with the other parties in Burma, as well as the international community.

16. (U) Public comments should focus on the regime's failure to cooperate with the UN and the need for the UN to focus its efforts on achieving meaningful progress on core political issues.

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Background  
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¶7. (C) Following a series of informal briefings to the P5 and with the blessing of the UNSC President, UN Special Advisor Ibrahim Gambari formally briefs the UNSC September 11 and the "Group of Friends on Burma" September 12 in regard to his recent fourth mission to Burma (August 18-23).. A "Group of Friends of the Secretary General on Burma" meeting, will be held at the Foreign Minister level September 29.

¶8. (C) Ref A described Gambari's likely approach at this briefing: an admission that he had not achieved what he had set out to accomplish during his recent trip to Burma, ameliorated by his unsupported claims of "some progress on process" and a "better atmosphere" in comparison to his March 2008 mission. As evidence of his claims of "progress", Gambari has noted privately that the regime now supports "regularized" UN engagement, will permit a UN staff member to apply for a visa to stay in Rangoon between visits, "could cooperate with areas of the economic forum," and "would consider" the release of political prisoners as part of an amnesty program. Gambari fails to note, that the regime had previously agreed to UN engagement and had also made prior promises (still unfulfilled) regarding prisoner releases. Gambari's continued focus on the "economic forum" is outside his core mandate to secure the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners and to engage the parties in a serious process of dialogue. It contravenes US views that there should be no incentives for the regime without meaningful progress on core political issues. The failure of his recent trip was exacerbated by his seemingly positive references to the 2010 elections that are flatly opposed by the National League for Democracy (NLD) and leading ethnic political representatives, and his failure to challenge the regime's propaganda efforts around his visit.

¶9. (C) Gambari's claims of progress have completely eroded his credibility and his usefulness as a Special Envoy. As noted by Embassy Rangoon (Refs B and C), over the course of his tenure as Special Advisor, Gambari's access to Burma's decision makers has evaporated; Senior General Than Shwe refuses to meet with him. Now even Aung San Suu Kyi, reportedly frustrated with Gambari's lack of progress, has declined to receive him. Furthermore, there is a complete lack of movement on a serious, time-bound dialogue between the regime and Aung San Suu Kyi, her release or even improvement in her conditions of confinement, and the release of other political prisoners.

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